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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001836

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [KNNP](#) [NI](#) [ZO](#) [POLMIL](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA DENIES MILITARY TIES TO NORTH KOREA

REF: A. STATE 173768

[B](#). ABUJA 1334

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas P. Furey for reasons 1.4
(D & F)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. Nigeria claims to have no military relationship with North Korea, and only a limited non-military relationship. The MFA's Director for Asia and Pacific Affairs said Nigeria's policy toward the DPRK is based on hopes for the peaceful resolution of all issues in the Six Party Talks and for the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula. He feared that the US approach toward North Korean arms sales will be counterproductive, and that gentle pressure is more likely to have positive results. Nigeria will soon engage the US for a license to import from South Korea components necessary to construct nuclear power plants. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) DCM and PolMilOff delivered Reftel A demarche to Prince Ariyo, the MFA's Director of Asia and Pacific Affairs, on 24 September 2005. The points were left as a nonpaper with Ariyo, and he promised to convey the US position upward in the MFA.

[1](#)3. (C) Ariyo said "frankly and honestly" Nigeria has no military engagement or discussions with the DPRK, and has not since Ariyo assumed his position in 2003. There is a North Korean ambassador to Nigeria, and Nigerian embassy in Pyongyang, he said, but the relationship includes neither military nor nuclear issues. He pointed to North Korean doctors in Nasarawa State and collaboration on small-scale embroidery and fish-processing factories in Jigawa and Yobe States as examples of low-technology cooperation typical of their bilateral economic relationship. Ariyo made a point of refuting press reports about talks with the Vice President of North Korea on nuclear cooperation from January 2004.

[1](#)4. (C) Ariyo said Nigeria supports a nuclear weapon-free Korean peninsula and the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula and has been pushing North Korea toward the peaceful resolution of all the issues discussed in the Six Party Talks. He fears that our request to cut off conventional arms sales could be counterproductive, especially in light of recent progress in the Six Party Talks. Ariyo said that a gentle nudging of North Korea would be more productive than the US approach (Note: This is very similar to Nigeria's approach to Zimbabwe. Obasanjo feels that quiet, personal diplomacy is more likely to achieve results than public assaults on Mugabe's government and is, therefore, unwilling to join any international movement against the GOZ. End Note).

[1](#)5. (C) Ariyo then launched into a discussion of Nigeria's need to develop a civilian nuclear energy generating capacity. (Note: Ref B discusses Nigeria's plan to build and operate 5-8 nuclear power plants by 2030. End Note.) He said that while Nigeria has been purchasing reactor components from a South Korean firm (NFI), a US license will be required to continue importing components and that we should expect the GON to begin engaging us on this license. He pointed out several times that Nigeria has not been working with North Korea on nuclear energy issues, and he did not attempt to link Nigerian support for our position to support of their civilian nuclear ambition.

[1](#)6. (C) Comment. Ariyo was more willing to engage on issues than most other interlocutors in the MFA, but seemed to step beyond his portfolio in his discussions of Nigeria's need for nuclear power. While he was clearly trying to prove his worth as an interlocutor, he failed to discuss the role of the North Korean Defense Attach in the North Korean Embassy in Abuja, who the Nigerian DIA says is constantly in their offices. If there is no military engagement or discussions occurring, why would they have this officer here? End comment.
CAMPBELL